

ROOTED IN LOVE, BLOOMING THROUGH
REFUSAL, RISING IN RESISTANCE:
15 Years of Jotería
Memory & World-Making

AJAAS 2026 National Conference

University of Utah

March 19th - 22nd, 2026

Mission

To nurture queer Latina/o/x, Chicana/o/x, and Indigenous individuals and communities through practices that recognize the importance of linking art, activism, and scholarship.



Vision

A presence of love
Of healing
Of communing among generations
Of solidarity and imagination
Of self-actualization
Where continuous movement of our
minds, bodies,
and spirits is encouraged
A world where violence is
challenged.
Where we voice our pain
Where we heal each other
A world of renewal
A future of abundance
Of transformation
A future where we are autonomous
And free.

WELCOME

2026

Querida Jotería,

We welcome you to the 2026 gathering and the XV-year anniversary of the Association of Jotería Art, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS) with the warmest embrace. Whether this is your first AJAAS conference or un re-encuentro, we embrace you all. At a challenging time for Afro-Latinx/e/a/o, Xicanx/e/a/o, and Latinx/e/a/o communities, we welcome you in the spirit of care, healing, critical dialogue, and making art and meaning together. Jotería gathers at AJAAS from places near and far with the vibrant purpose of holding space for pleasure, joy, and re-membering.

This year, we convene in Salt Lake City at the University of Utah, on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, and Ute Tribes, a crossroads and meeting place for Indigenous peoples. We come together to mark 15 years of jotería arts, activism, scholarship, and world-making—years that have carried us through possibility and harm, celebration and grief, struggle and survival.

Our 2026 theme, “Rooted in Love, Blooming through Refusal, Rising in Resistance: 15 Years of Jotería Memory & World-Making,” asks us to take seriously what it means to build, and to keep building, amid intensifying violence: anti-queer and anti-trans sentiment and policy making, criminalization of migration, attacks on justice-centered education, environmental and food injustice, and the ongoing carceral and genocidal projects bearing on the lives of millions in Congo, Sudan, and Palestine-Israel. This violence shakes the core of our communities and souls. We return to AJAAS in response to this soul-shattering reality because jotería nourishes our roots with love, cultivates our determination to endure, and motivates our rising in revolt. We return to jotería because togetherness is urgent and necessary.

We gather because jotería is our way of making life through struggle and resilience. Jotería is collective practice, the everyday labor of caring, organizing, teaching, making art, and building community in the midst of crisis. Jotería is memory, the living archive of elders, lineages, and wisdom/sabidurías. Jotería is refusal, a principled “no” or “againstness” to erasure, disposability, fungibility, criminalization, and the demand to be palatable or remain silent. And jotería is a stubborn, luminous commitment to life: an insistence on joy, dignity, and world-making even when the world tries to break us.

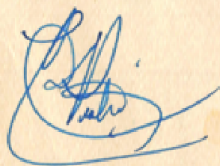
The late Gloria Anzaldúa teaches us that we live and make knowledge in the borderlands, where pain and possibility coexist, and where transformation is born through the daily labor of crossing, stitching, and re-making the self and the world. We hold this invitation close to our hearts as we welcome you into a weekend of reorientation and reconnection: to our cuerpos and breath, to our creative imaging and ancestral memory, to our elders and youth, to our chosen kin, and to the futures we refuse to surrender. In the spirit of Anzaldúa's borderlands, we gather to listen for what *jotería* is saying through writing, moving, laughing, crying, making offerings, conspiring, resting, creating, and imagining, so that what has tried to break us becomes ground for new life.

We are grateful for your presence and for the many ways you shape AJAAS into the inspirational, rigorous, sometimes messy, yet loving space it has become. We are not in the business of romancing *jotería*. We also contend with fears, regrets, jealousy, and at times even resentment. Trauma, the intergenerational kind, has left its ugly carvings on our otherworldly skins. But in the tradition of making ourselves anew, making-face, and making-soul, we gather because it carries the promise of healing transformation. Your participation sustains this collective project, and we invite you to share conviviality with each other, attending to one another's wellbeing, and multiplying the gifts of an unprecedented lineup: ceremonies, panels, roundtables, keynotes, performances, and workshops. Our hope is that, by witnessing *jotería* and its life-affirming blossoming, you may feel moved to take on responsibilities that will help AJAAS grow, through board service, working groups, and community-centered projects.

Last but not least, we ask you to join us in extending our sincere gratitude to the University of Utah College of Education, Dean Dr. Frankie Santos Laanan, its Department of Education, Culture, and Society, Department of Communication, and the University of Utah site committee volunteers for their support and partnership in making this Encuentro possible. We also thank the members of AJAAS National Board for their support and labor. Special thanks to Desire Gabriela Galvez for her design of the Conference Program.

With love,

Dr. PJ DiPietro & Dr. Omi Salas-SantaCruz



Omi Salas-SantaCruz

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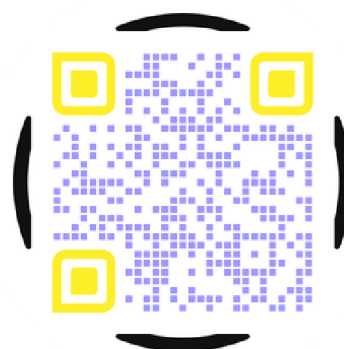
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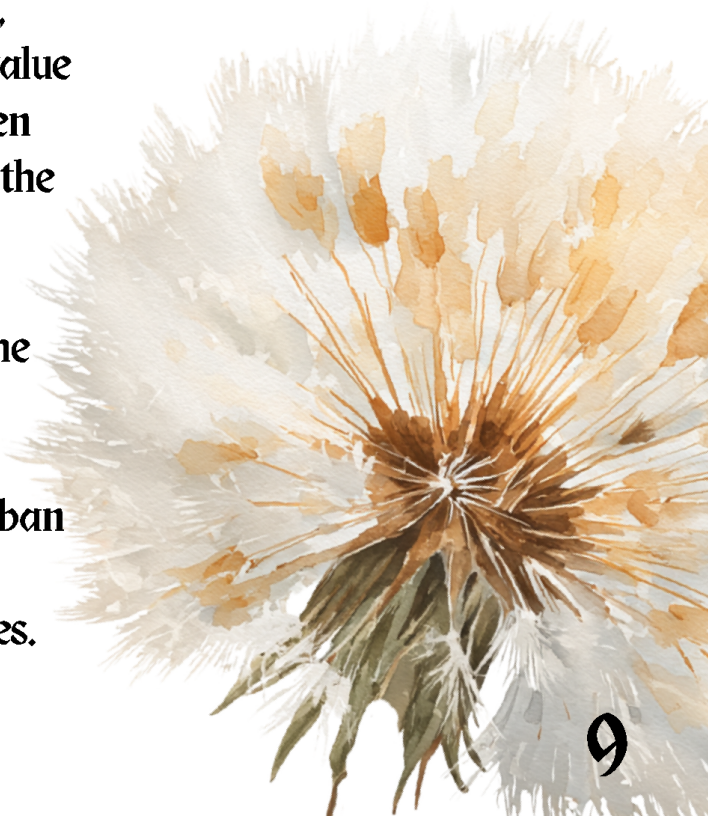
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FAQ

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Utah has both historical and contemporary relationships with Indigenous peoples. Given that the Salt Lake Valley has always been a gathering place for Indigenous peoples, we acknowledge that this land, which is named for the Ute Tribe, is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, and Ute Tribes and is a crossroad for Indigenous peoples. The University of Utah recognizes the enduring relationships between many Indigenous peoples and their traditional homelands. We are grateful for the territory upon which we gather today; we respect Utah's Indigenous peoples, the original stewards of this land; and we value the sovereign relationships that exist between tribal governments, state governments, and the federal government. Today, approximately 60,000 American Indian and Alaska Native peoples live in Utah. As a state institution, the University of Utah is committed to serving Native communities throughout Utah in partnership with Native Nations and our Urban Indian communities through research, education, and community outreach activities.



ROOTED IN LOVE, BLOOMING THROUGH REFUSAL, RISING IN RESISTANCE

In celebration of fifteen years of the Association for Jotería Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS), the 2026 biannual conference gathers to honor the enduring legacy, community strength, and creative power of jotería scholars, artists, and organizers. This anniversary, our collective quinceañera, is both a moment of reflection and a call to action. Under the theme Rooted in Love, Blooming through Refusal, Rising in Resistance, we come together to celebrate the lineages that ground us, the imaginative refusals that sustain us, and the future-building work that continues to rise from jotería wisdom and joy.

We convene during a time when public discourse and policy increasingly seek to restrict conversations about race, gender, sexuality, and history. Against this backdrop, we affirm the enduring contributions and humanity of queer, trans, nonbinary, Two-Spirit, Indigenous, Afro-Latinx, Latinx, Xicanx, Latina, and Latino communities. We come together not to provoke, but to build; to build knowledge, solidarity, care, and connection across generations, geographies, and disciplines.

In a political climate where inclusion and equity work is being curtailed, we uplift the intellectual, creative, and spiritual labor that has always sustained our communities. Refusal, in this context, is not rejection—it is an act of care. It is a commitment to ethical engagement, cultural memory, and collective flourishing. We bloom not in opposition, but in devotion—to one another, to our histories, and to the possibilities we continue to imagine and create.

The theme of rootedness invokes our shared histories and cultural wisdoms, reminding us that love—familial, communal, erotic, and intellectual—has always been a sustaining force in jotería life. Drawing inspiration from ancestral symbols and practices of the Nahua peoples of Abya Yala, we hold love as a generative guide. For AJAAS, love is not simply an emotion; it is a way of caring for each other now and in the future.

As we commemorate fifteen years of AJAAS, we invite our community to reflect, reconnect, and rise together. We do so with respect, clarity of purpose, and a deep belief in the power of education, art, and activism to build a more just world—for everyone.

This conference welcomes community members, artists, educators, cultural workers, and healers to reflect on the evolving terrain of jotería knowledge, memory, and imagination. Together, we ask: How do jotería communities create meaning, belonging, and futures in the face of adversity? What histories and lineages have nourished our growth? How are we preparing the ground for future generations committed to justice, dignity, knowledge, and freedom? And how does love—understood as a practice, an ethic, and a sustaining force—guide the ways we learn with, build, protect, and care for one another?

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SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Location: College of Education 1721 Campus Center Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Thursday, March 19, 2026

4:30PM - 5:30PM	BIENVENIDA College of Education, Room 1151
5:30PM - 5:45PM	Opening Ceremony College of Education, Room 1151
5:45PM - 7:00PM	Opening Remarks and Traviesa Studio Presentation College of Education, Room 1151

Friday, March 20, 2026

8:30PM - 4:00PM	Registration and Check-In College of Education, Room 1151
9:00AM - 9:45AM	Breakfast College of Education, Room 1151
9:00AM - 10:25AM	Welcome and Ancestral Invitation College of Education, Room 1151
10:30AM - 12:00PM	Concurrent Session #1
10:00AM - 5:00PM	The AJAAS 8th House: Healing Justice Practice Space & Integration Lounge College of Education, Room 1220 HUB
11:00AM - 5:00PM	Joteria Mercado @ Red Chair Corner
12:00PM - 1:00PM	Lunch (will be provided) College of Education Room 1151
1:00PM - 2:30PM	Plática with Celia College of Education Room 1151
2:45PM - 4:15PM	Concurrent Session #2
4:30PM - 6:00PM	Concurrent Session #3
6:00PM - 9:00PM	Dinner (on your own)

Location: College of Education 1721 Campus Center Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Saturday, March 21st, 2020

8:30AM - 4:00PM	Registration and Check-In College of Education, Room 1151
9:00AM - 9:30AM	Breakfast College of Education, Room 1151
9:30AM - 10:25AM	WELCOME by Co-Chairs Ex-Officio objetos de [des]amor (Spoken Word by Juan Antonio Trujillo) College of Education, Room 1151
10:30AM - 12:00PM	Concurrent Session #4
10:00AM - 5:00PM	The AJAAS 8th House: Healing Justice Practice Space & Integration Lounge College of Education, Room 1220 HUB
11:00AM - 5:00PM	Joteria Mercado College of Education Red Chair Hallway
12:00PM - 1:30PM	Lunch (on your own)
1:45PM - 3:15PM	Concurrent Session #5
3:30PM - 5:00PM	Concurrent Session #6
6:00PM - 9:00PM	Queerceañera @ Alumni House 155 SOUTH CENTRAL CAMPUS DRIVE SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84112

Sunday, March 22nd, 2020

9:30AM - 11:00AM	Closing Ceremony College of Education, Room 1151
11:15AM - 2:00PM	Farewell (lunch on own) Salt Lake City

AJAAS NATIONAL BOARD



Co-Chair

Dr. PJ DiPietro is an activist/scholar who works at the intersection of anthropology, human geography, and philosophy. With a transdisciplinary and decolonial approach, she engages theories of knowing and creating multiple realities and bodies as they relate to Latinx, Afro-Latinx, and Indigenous communities, as well as gender nonconforming and travesti/trans collectives. She collaborates with various organizations committed to social justice, including Futuro Trans.

She is co-editor of *Speaking Face to Face: The Visionary Philosophy of Maria Lugones* (SUNY Press, 2019) and *Trans Philosophy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2024), and author of *Sideways Selves: Travesti and Joteria Struggles Across the Américas* (University of Texas Press, 2025).

DiPietro serves as principal investigator for Trans Diasporic Study (2025-2027), a multi-institution research collaboration, and as one of the general editors of *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*. Learn more about her at www.pjsnest.com.



Co-Chair

Dr. Omi Salas-SantaCruz (they/them/elle) is an Assistant Professor of Educational Theory and Philosophy, with a focus on gender and sexuality in education, in the Department of Education, Culture & Society at the University of Utah. Their scholarship uses conceptual and qualitative approaches to examine how educational institutions produce categories of personhood, knowledge, and legitimacy through policy, discourse, and administrative infrastructures, and how institutional “common sense” is stabilized and disrupted through everyday practices of evaluation, compliance, care, and governance. They are the founder of the JOTA Lab (Justice-Oriented Teaching and Theories in the Academy), a cross-institutional mentorship community supporting University of Utah students, doctoral candidates across universities nationwide, and community scholars.



Co-Chair Elect

Maya Chinchilla is a media maker, writer and author of *The Cha Cha Files: A Chapina Poética*. Her writing has been published in *Latino Poetry: The Library of America Anthology*, *Mujeres de Maíz en Movimiento*, and *The Jota Anthology* and is a recipient of the 2023 Mellon Foundation U.S. Latino Digital Humanities Grant. She is also the editor of the forthcoming anthology,

CentroMariconadas: A Queer and Trans Central American Anthology. Maya has a rich background in media, having hosted the interview talk show *Live and Queer*, produced by the Queer Cultural Center; co-hosted the podcast *Trek Table*, and produced the digital space odyssey: *Central American Unicorns in Space*. As a lecturer, she teaches Creative Writing, English, Media Studies, and Chicana/Latina/o/x Studies at several San Francisco Bay Area-based universities. A founding member of AJAAS, Maya served on the board as an artistic liaison from 2017 to 2024, furthering her lifelong mission to create spaces for artists, visionaries, and changemakers to build and thrive.





Co-Chair Elect

Dr. Ángel de Jesus González, Ed.D. (he/they/elle) is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education Administration and Leadership (HEAL) at Fresno State University. As a first-generation queer, Latinx, joto, they engage their scholarship through post-structuralist and transformative paradigms rooted in Xicana/Latina feminists epistemologies. Dr. González's research agenda focuses on three strands; 1) examining the conditions, experiences, and outcomes for queer and/or trans communities; 2) Latinx Leadership and organizational change; and 3) racial equity policy implementation all within the community college context. As an interdisciplinary scholar, Dr. González employs critical theories and methods such as jotería studies, intersectionality, queer pláticas, testimonio, queer chisme, queer phenomenology, critical policy analysis, and QuantCrit to name a few. Dr. González is a Faculty Affiliate for the Queer and Trans Latinx/a/o in HigherEd Collective and the Community College HigherEd Access Leadership Equity Scholarship (CCHALES) research collective at San Diego State University (SDSU). They is part of the Queer Trans People in Education (QTPiE) Research Team as an Emerging Scholar at the University of Vermont (UVM).



Art Liaison

Dr. Gabriel Pulido Ph.D. (él/he/him), is a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Higher Education in the Educational Leadership and Higher Education Administration department at the West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Intrinsically linked, the following are his research commitments; 1) Artistic Performance and Retention in Higher Education, 2) Mentorship, Relationality, and Belonging, and 3) Arts-based Methodologies and Activism in Social Science Research. Dr. Pulido earned his Ph.D. in Higher Education with minors in African American and Diaspora Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Penn State University. Additionally, he has an M.A. in Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership from the University of Northern Colorado and a B.A. in Critical Race & Ethnic Studies and Latin American & Latino Studies from University of California, Santa Cruz. Dr. Pulido's academic and creative writing often intersect and find a home at the center of healing. Centering joy, love, and resilience, he uses both creative and academic writing to work towards a collective liberation. When not writing, Dr. Pulido can be found near a body of water dreaming of becoming just as free.



Activism Liaison

Ms. Reina (CÁMO) Basquiat Cemi'no (she/ella/it), known artistically as LA REINA TAÍNA, is an entrepreneurial Creative Director, Cultural Bearer, and Thought Leader. As the founder of LA REINA TAÍNA, LLC, she blends Afro-Caribbean rhythms, experimental soundscapes, and decolonial narratives into transformative multimedia projects. In addition to her creative direction, Ms. Reina hosts the VAMOS HABLAR INGLÉS podcast, where she explores the intersections of culture, politics, and art through an Afro-Jotx lens. Ms. Reina holds a B.A. in International and Public Affairs from Brown University, where she began to shape her academic and artistic pursuits. Her work redefines the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, citizenship, and class, with a focus on the lived experiences of marginalized communities. Over the past three years, Ms. Reina expanded Jotería Studies into Afro-Jotería, an academic framework that centers Afro-Latinx, Afro-Caribbean, and Afro-Indigenous Queer and Trans individuals. Visit www.lareinataina.com to learn more!



Activism Liaison

Izel Coatlicue Lemus is a Chicana woman. Her pronouns are she/her/hers. Izel graduated from California State University Fullerton with a B.A. in psychology, but soon after discovered that she had an interest in providing to her community. Izel comes from a family that are danzantes and performs across California to share with people what the danza azteca community is. Within this niche community, she has found that there are ways to unite danza azteca and activism.



Scholarship Liaison

Dr. Sergio A. Gonzalez, Ph.D. (él/he/him), is a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Higher Education specializing in Critical Qualitative Methods in the Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy department at the University of Pittsburgh. His research interests have intersecting commitments: (1) understanding the lived experiences of historically marginalized individuals, specifically QTPOC communities, within educational environments; (2) exploring the role of Joteria Microaffirmations in higher education scholarship; and (3) engaging with co-creators to make meaning of Queer of Color theorizing, such as Joteria Pedagogy, through critical qualitative approaches. As a first-generation academic, being the first in his family to graduate from high school, undergraduate, and graduate school has shaped how he shows up in community, as jotería, and navigates academia. He is an hijo to his Madre y Padre, a brother, a Tio, Madrina, Nino, and Nieto to his chosen family and family.



Scholarship Liaison

Jaime Korima Rodriguez (They/Ella) is a disabled, nonbinary Jota and QTBIPOC punk storyteller rooted in Los Angeles and their ancestral Cali, Colombian, and Rarámuri lineages. A first-generation high school graduate, Jaime earned a B.A. in Sociology from San Francisco State University and is completing an M.A. in Latin American Studies at Cal State LA. Their research and poetry, navigates the intersections of housing instability and brujería, centering the ongoing self-reimagining of the jota. Jaime was the Pride cover feature for Inside Fullerton magazine and has been featured in HuffPost Latino Voices and ELLE Magazine. Currently signed with Riots of Roses Publishing House, Jaime is set to release their second book, JOTA HISTORIAS: POETIC MAGIC, in 2026. Find their poetry at jaimekorimarodriguez.com.



Membership Coordinator

Dr. Anita Tijerina Revilla is a muxerista and joteria activist-scholar, Professor, and Chair of CSULA's Department of Chicana(o) and Latina(o) Studies. Her research focuses on student movements and social justice education, specifically in the areas of Chicana/Latina, immigrant, feminist and queer rights activism. Her expertise is in the areas of Joteria (Queer and Latinx) Studies, Chicanx Education, Chicana/Latina Feminism, and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies. She is a Harlandale High School graduate from the Southside of San Antonio and the first in her family to go to college. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Princeton University and master's degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, she earned her doctorate from UCLA Graduate School of Education in Social Sciences and Comparative Education with an emphasis in Race and Ethnic Studies.



Treasurer

Dr. Jorge Estrada is a lecturer faculty member in Chicana and Chicano Studies and Spanish at Cal State Fullerton. He obtained his Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese from the University of New Mexico, where he also attended as an undergraduate. His areas of study are Latin American and Latinx literature, film, cultural studies, gender and sexuality, and joteria studies. Dr. Estrada has taught at various campuses in the CSU system, the State University of New York (SUNY), and more recently, Portland State and Oregon State University. Currently, he is working on a book-length manuscript on sexuality and monstrosity in Mexican and Chicanx literature.



Queerstorian/Media Liaison

Ezekiel Acosta (he/el) is a PhD Candidate in the American Studies Department at the University of New Mexico. His concentration fields are Central American Studies, Archival Studies, and Sexuality and Gender in Latinx Studies, and his research analyzes visual art and archival materials. He is of Guatemalan, Mexican, and Puerto Rican descent.





Archivist

Lizeth (Liz) Zepeda (she/ella) is originally from Santa Ana, Orange County, California. She is the university archivist at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. She holds a Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Arizona School of Information. Her research and archival interests include working with BIPOC communities, outreach programming, community and queer(ing) archives. When she is not working, she likes to go on hikes/walks with her partner and dog, Monita, listen to audiobooks, and cross-stitch.



Healing Coordinator

Veronica Garcia was born in Los Angeles and raised on the U.S./ Mexico border in El Paso, Texas. She has over 20 years of experience working with social justice groups and has supported hundreds in building their grassroots fundraising capacity. Veronica organized the Paso del Norte OUT Fund, a grant-making initiative of El Paso's LGBTQIA community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people, and our allies) and the Detained Migrant Solidarity Committee, a group committed to ending unjust and inhumane migrant detention across the southwest U.S. border region. In addition to extensive real-world experience in the nonprofit sector, she has a B.A. in Sociology and a Masters degree in Nonprofit Management. Currently, Veronica leads the Wealth Reclamation Academy of Practitioners (WRAP), a national network of social justice grassroots fundraisers recontextualizing how organizers think about and practice movement resourcing in the U.S. Her work with WRAP centers Tool No.4, a curriculum she co-designed as a loose incense blend of ten powerful plant allies. The curriculum's recipe includes medicinal herbs, cured tree resins, dried roots, and seeds gifted from Amaranth, an ancient plantcestor. Tool No.4 is formulated to stimulate ancestral healing and calibrated to a Just Transition.



Sustainability and Development

Alfonso Ayala III is a proud, queer, sober Chicano. He is currently a doctoral student at The University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a degree in Mexican American and Latina/o Studies. His research interests stem from his own experiences with his identity, sexuality, and sobriety, and he's committed to a research agenda that humanizes Queers of Color living in recovery from drug addiction. He thinks frequently about queer Chicana/x/o sobriety, identity, desire, and spirituality; embodied memory; storytelling and autoethnography; Queer of Color Critique; and, dis-respectability politics. When he's not doing school stuff, he is active in the sober community, enjoys working out, likes museums and art shows, and loves watching TV. He is currently on a quest to become a cinephile, so would love any movie recommendations! He also loves spending time with his nephews and niece in San Antonio!



Co-Chair Ex-Officio

Joanna Núñez is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at Sacramento State. She is a queer Chicana feminist activist scholar. In 2019, she earned her Ph.D. in Feminist Studies at the University of Minnesota. Her dissertation was titled "Mi Mamá me Enseño! Teaching and Learning Mexicana and Chicana Feminisms in the Home." Her work explores the connection between home and intimate community building practices, particularly those within queer and feminist communities of color, in facilitating movements for social transformation. Her most recent publications can be found in *The Handbook of Latinos in Education and Transmovimientos: Latinx Queer Migrations, Bodies, and Spaces*.



Co-Chair Ex-Officio

Roberto C. Orozco is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. He is also an affiliate faculty with the Department of Chicano Latino Studies. His research explores questions around race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality with relation to college student activism, student development, and queer resistance and worldmaking in and outside of higher education contexts. He grounds his work at the intersection of Jotería Studies, Critical Race Theory, and Chicana Latina Feminisms to examine the identity and socio-political consciousness of queer Latinx/a/o student activists in higher education. His professional experiences in student affairs and higher education include his role as the Director of the Center for Social Justice at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; his roles within the Center for Leadership & Social Change at Florida State University, and his work in the Division of Enrollment Management and the Tyler Clementi Center at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.



Letter from Dean Frankie Santos Laanan

Dear AJAAS conference attendees and campus partners,

We are honored to welcome you to the fifteenth national Association for Jotería Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS) conference. The College of Education and the University of Utah are proud to be the first in the Mountain West to host AJAAS, especially as Jotería pedagogy continues to expand across disciplines. Here in the College of Education, our graduate students are translating the principles of Jotería into carceral studies, math education, and critical Pacific Islands & Oceania studies, and several of this year's conference sessions even grew out of our unique graduate-level Jotería course.

In the spirit of this year's theme, "Rooted in love, blooming through refusal, rising in resistance: 15 years of jotería memory and world-making," we invite you to engage with our faculty, students, and staff, and enjoy our partner offerings throughout the conference. Remember that all attendees may visit the Utah Museum of Fine Arts free of charge, and that Saturday's "queerceañera" brings many opportunities to enjoy music, performances, and food, as well as the conference recognition ceremony. I am pleased to share that our College of Education Dean's Office has sponsored this event.

In closing, I would like to thank our supporters across the University of Utah: the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences and the College of Humanities—particularly the Department of Communication—as well as the Office of Undergraduate Research.

With gratitude,

Frankie Santos Laanan
Dean
College of Education
University of Utah



Letter from Verónica Valdez, Department of Education, Culture, and Society Chair

¡Bienvenidos! Welcome to the University of Utah. The AJAAS conference theme, *Rooted in Love, Blooming through Refusal, Rising in resistance: 15 Years of Jotería Memory & World-making*, honors the vital contributions Jotería communities make to education, culture, and social justice movements. As Chair of the Department of Education, Culture and Society (ECS), it is a profound honor to welcome you to this gathering shaped by ancestral wisdom, queer joy, and collective action.

The AJAAS gathering invites us to engage in inquiry rooted in community knowledge and justice-centered world-building, challenging dominant narratives while cultivating liberatory possibilities rooted in community care. These commitments resonate deeply with our department's values and aspirations. Grounded in the social foundations of education, our department remains committed to cultivating and supporting educators and scholars from diverse communities who lead innovative, rigorous, interdisciplinary educational research and praxis. In this spirit, our department has proudly offered a unique graduate course on Jotería pedagogy, taught by ECS faculty member Dr. Omi Salas-SantaCruz, reflecting our commitment to advancing this work in teacher and graduate education. Several sessions at this year's conference are directly derived from that course, showcasing the vibrant intellectual and creative work it has inspired among current and former College of Education and ECS graduate students. The scholarship presented here demonstrates the transformative potential of Jotería pedagogy and scholarship.

Thank you for bringing your stories, your scholarship, and your corazón to Utah, the University of Utah, and to this gathering. Together, we honor the past, affirm our present, and imagine futures where all people can flourish.



Verónica E. Valdez, Ph.D.

Chair & Professor, Department of Education, Culture, and Society

Site Committee Chair Letter



Querida Jotería,

Welcome to Salt Lake City and to the University of Utah. If this is your first time here, you may be arriving with stories that flatten this place into a single narrative. I invite you to let this weekend be a practice in doing otherwise: arrive with openness, listen with care, and let this land and its communities meet you beyond what you expected. Salt Lake City holds a small but intentional community of queer, trans, migrant, and jotería folks who keep making life possible, through care, through presence, through choosing relation even when it's hard. I hope you feel that intention here.

A note from the organizing process: systems are designed to exhaust us, and that pressure can spill into how we relate. Many of us are arriving after months of noise-politics, institutions, and the everyday weight of living. Thank you for coming despite the barriers. If overwhelm shows up as anger or impatience, you are not alone. As María Lugones reminds us, "hard-to-handle anger" can be clarifying—a signal that helps us refuse what is unacceptable. My hope is we meet these feelings with tenderness and political clarity, so they become guidance rather than harm.

Because we are in Utah, on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, and Ute Tribes, I offer two invitations: turn toward the land—step outside, breathe, notice the Wasatch, and remember this place holds histories older than the state and our institutions. And bring your ancestors with you. Name who you're bringing, if you wish—quietly, with a friend, or written under your name tag—and let that sabiduría guide how you learn, witness, and celebrate, including at the Queerceañera.

These remarks may be in the first person, but they carry a village. Please join me in thanking our local site committee and volunteers: Dr. Leandra Hernández, Cydney Caradonna, Roberto Laanan, Andrea Preza, and Ellie Pelayo. Your labor, creativity, and care are part of the welcome.

Finally, enter this weekend with generosity toward others and yourself. Rest when you need. Take breaks without apology. Drink water, step outside, return to your body. This weekend belongs to your spirit as much as your mind.

Thank you for coming. May you be surprised by the care here—by the people, by the land, and by what becomes possible when we choose each other with loving perception.

Con amor y gratitud,

Omi Salas-SantaCruz, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Education, University of Utah
Conference Site Chair & AJAAS Co-Chair
Salt Lake City, UT (2020)

SITE COMMITTEE



Conference Liaison

Cydney Y. Caradonna (she/her/ella) is a Bay Area grown poet, activist, and PhD Candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Utah. Cydney is currently the inaugural Graduate Fellow for the JOTA (Justice Oriented Theories/Teaching in the Academy) Lab, and Consulting Scholar for the Black Feminist Eco Lab at the University of Utah. Cydney's research interests include: incarceration as gendered violence in/of education, Decolonial Feminist theory and methodologies, and Abolitionist possibilities for educational practice.

Programming Committee

Dr. Leandra H. Hernández is an associate professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Communication at the University of Utah. As a queer critical/feminist health and media studies scholar, her research and teaching interests explore the cultural causes and impacts of gender violence and reproductive/injustice, as well as physical and digital organizing and resistance. She is the author and co-editor of eight books, and she has published over 75 book chapters and journal articles. Moreover, as a former organizer for the Salt Lake Area Queer Climbers organization, she is dedicated to queer worldbuilding both in academic and community spaces. Most recently, she was the recipient of the 2025 National Communication Association Everett Hughes Holle Award for Social Justice and Community Engagement in recognition of her mentorship and community engaged projects.



Spatial Mapping Committee Lead

Andrea Preza (she/they) is a PhD student in the Education, Culture, and Society program at the University of Utah, where her work examines the relationship between language, literacy, migration, and care systems. She is particularly interested in how immigrant families learn to navigate mental health and educational institutions, as well as questions of literacy, culture, and meaning-making across linguistic contexts. As a first-year doctoral student, Andrea is currently exploring methodological and conceptual possibilities, drawing from decolonial feminist thought, learning sciences, and critical literacy studies. She is grateful to be part of the AJAAS community, which offers an intellectual and relational space to collectively think through decolonial methods, care, and knowledge production.



Hotel/Travel/Accommodations Lead

Cha McNeil's (She/ Her) activism work is deeply personal and rooted in her unwavering belief that education is a fundamental human right, essential for creating equitable opportunities and empowering people to define their own success. As a fifth-year PhD student, her research focuses on the reintegration of students who have been impacted by the criminal justice system through education. Cha's 23-year-long advocacy career is shaped by her own experiences and a commitment to breaking down systemic barriers. She holds degrees from Columbia University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and Bergen Community College, and is an active member of Beta Kappa Sigma Black and Latina Sorority Inc.



Eleanor "Ellie" Estrada is a jota activist-scholar and first-generation Ph.D. candidate in Communication at the University of Utah. Her interdisciplinary scholarship draws from women of color feminisms, racial rhetorical criticism, trans* and Jotería studies, and Chicana/o/x studies. Her dissertation develops chisme as theory, method, and analytic. Ellie has earned conference awards and published in flagship journals while co-teaching for Gender Studies and working with University Neighborhood Partners. As a binary trans* Chicana and methodological chismosa, she explores how community survival strategies offer lessons for the Academy. Outside research, she attends community events, chismeas with friends over cafecitos, or watches movies with her partner.

Health & Access

Masks are recommended in conference rooms and common areas (except when eating, drinking, or presenting). A limited number of masks will be available at Registration—please bring a high-quality mask if you can. Please take a COVID-19 home test and/or check for symptoms within 24 hours before traveling. If you test positive or feel sick, we strongly encourage you to stay home and join virtually when possible. We will not have COVID tests on-site. If you develop symptoms during the conference, notify an organizer so we can support confidential contact tracing, and please remain in your hotel room until you're feeling better.

We invite everyone to contribute to collective access. Presenters: please do a brief access check-in and use microphones when available (or invite attendees to sit closer). All conference buildings are wheelchair accessible (ramps/elevators). If you have mobility or other access needs, please let an organizer know so we can problem-solve. See the program for the healing justice space location. An all-gender restroom and lactation room are located on the 2nd floor of the College of Education; signage will be provided. Accessibility feedback is welcome at ajaas.national@gmail.com.

Healing Space



The 8th House, AJAAS: Healing Justice Space & Integration Lounge

The 8th House at AJAAS is organized around the following Healing Justice Principles:

- Collective Trauma is transformed collectively
- There is no single model of care
- Healing strategies are rooted in place and ancestral technologies

From: Healing Justice Lineages: Dreaming at the Crossroads of Liberation, Collective Care, and Safety
by Cara Page and Erica Woodland

The 8th House references traditional astrology. Astrology is a system of deriving meaning from the stars and planets and where they are in relationship to each other at any given time in their orbit. There are 12 houses of astrology that signify different areas of our lives. The 8th House centers themes of death, mental health, inheritances, taboos, and transformation. As members of queer and trans community, all of us have experiences with these themes. We have seen the name scrolls, we know our loved ones are over represented in fatality statistics, and white supremacy, racial capitalism, carceral models of care and heteropatriarchy asks us to move on and look ahead, build the new and shiny, grow endlessly towards profit, and shield us from the true costs of extraction & extinction. Our invitation is to be with us in a cultural alternative. Join us to deepen into these themes, to create space to be in the question of what might emerge when we take the time and space for healing, integration, and restoration.

Step into an oasis of your imagination, a haven within the conference dedicated to healing justice practice, integration, and rest. We invite you to delve into the intricate aspects of human experience represented in The 8th House of astrology: death, mental health, inheritances, taboos, and transformation. The 8th House serves as a refuge for collective exploration, where there is no wrong way to engage in healing. Come claim time and space for self at The 8th House; engage individually and/or collectively. Let's reject a one-size-fits-all model of community care, and ground our healing strategies in the wisdom of place and ancestral technologies.

Play with sensory experiences that may include: a tea service offering, time with live plants and dry herbs, a community altar, soft landings with pillows and blankets, and engagement with music, sound, scent, and silence. We uplift the role of practice as a vital ingredient for transformation and invite engagement to experiment with intuition toning, relationship training, adaptation, collective grieving, and release. We will have a participatory altar in our space and invite you to bring items to contribute. In alignment with disability justice principles, The 8th House will practice universal masking.

Find 8th House Healing Justice Space & Integration Lounge

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Friday, March 20th, 2020 & Saturday, March 21st, 2020

(College of Education, Room 1220 HUB)

10:00AM - 5:00PM

Plática con cesia domínguez lópez

“Whiteness—or colonial cultures—have resulted in our communities being under attack. Our people are being kidnapped off the street, and families are being torn apart, while gender affirming care and queer and trans folks are being erased in state policies. Yet, we have been here before. The horrors persist, but so do the jotás, jotos, jotes.

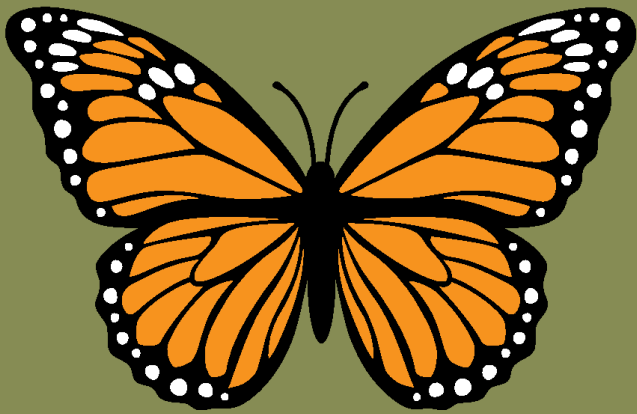
While colonial cultures foster premature death, Indigenous futures are love and aliveness. Leaning into our ancestral cosmovisiones gives breath, ritual, story and respect for life. Como dicen Los Zapatistas, “nuestra lucha es por la vida.” Our ancestral care technologies give us the strength to sit close to the complicated—grief, shame, longing, devotion, rupture, refusal—and to be stronger for it. In this session, we’ll explore cultivating care ecologies for the self-determination of all bodies. We’ll practice having courageous conversations and be introduced to tools that support us in creating care networks for ourselves and our collective bodies.”
-cesia.

cesia domínguez lópez is a nonbinary, cuir Ñuu Savi (Mixtec) abolitionist death worker, artist, and somatic practitioner cultivating care ecologies for Black & Indigenous communities to florecer. Rooted in their ancestral life-affirming cosmovisión, they experiment with care technologies to materialize more aliveness, pleasure, and self-determination for all bodies. They’re the founder and owner of Traviesa Studios: An Indigenous Futures Lab.



Thursday

March 19th, 2026



Thursday, March 19, 2020

Location: College of Education 1721 Campus Center Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

4:30PM - 5:30PM

**Bienvenida
College of Education,
Room 1151**

5:30PM - 5:45PM

**Opening Ceremony
College of Education,
Room 1151
Moderators: Dr. Omi Salas-SantaCruz
and Cydney Caradonna**

5:45PM - 7:00PM

**Opening Remarks and Traviesa Studio
Presentation
College of Education,
Room 1151
Presenters: Traviesa Studios, Cesia
Domínguez López**



Friday

March 20th, 2026

An Ancestral Invitation: Re-aligning With The Land

Friday, March 20th, 2020

9:50AM - 10:25AM

by

charlie amáyá scott

The land is our relative. It is a relative that has nurtured, nourished, and sustained many of us for millennia. The land is a haven for many and does not discriminate. Instead, queerness and gender variance thrives with the land. Our relative yearns for us to reconnect with our ancestors, those who have cultivated sustainable and reciprocal relationships with the land, reminding us of our humble beginnings. This is a call for an ancestral alignment, the intentional practice of recollecting and embodying ancestral ways of knowing and being informing one's present and presence; an encouragement to be in right relation with the land and the ancestors. Will you listen?



A Diné scholar born and raised within the Navajo Nation, charlie amáyá scott, Ph.D. (she/her) is dedicated to inspiring joy and justice. Dr. Amáyá writes with a desire and dream for a more just and liberating world that supports and celebrates the next generation of Queer, Trans, and Indigenous brilliance, beauty, and presence. She is generous with her knowledge around settler colonialism, Indigenous trans joy, and refusal. Through poetry, photography, and educational social media content, she reflects and shares her perspectives on what it means to be Diné, Queer, and Trans in the 21st century on Instagram and TikTok at @DineAesthetics.

Friday, March 20th, 2026

Location: College of Education 1721 Campus Center Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

8:30AM – 4:00PM Registration and Check-In

9:00AM – 9:45 AM Breakfast & Welcome by Dean of College of Education & Chairs of ECS, & AJAAS Co-chairs

9:50AM – 10:25AM Ancestral Invitation by Dr. charlie amáyá scott

10:30AM – 12:00PM

Concurrent Session #1

1.1 Film & Media Session: "Between Worlds: The Muxxexe Identity"
College of Education – Room 1151

Presenter: Jennifer Shaw, California State University, Northridge
A documentary about Muxxexe Identity, who resides in Colton, CA.

1.2 Research Papers and Works-in-Progress: "Claiming Jotería Futures: Pedagogy, Coalition, and World-Making" College of Education – Room 1145

"Jotería Pedagogies and Prison Pedagogies: (Re)membering New Worlds"
Presenter: Kyra Solis, University of California, Los Angeles

Jotería methods/pedagogy for worldmaking in the carceral classroom allows for a flexibility and intervention against criminalization towards (re)membering a more just world. Using tenets of arts, activism and scholarship, a jotería approach allows for new relationships and educational experiences towards a world free of oppression. In short, this paper is an in-progress study of jotería pedagogy and its impacts in carceral educational spaces, particularly how art and education can open new means of worldbuilding and archiving.

"We Gather, We Break, We Build: On the Making of a Trans Queer Latine/x National Movement"

Presenter: Rafael Ramirez Solórzano, University of Florida

Drawing from my experience as a racial justice facilitator, this paper examines two organizations' evolving commitments towards a national movement for queer and trans Latine rights. Centering a community-engaged scholarly lens, it explores process, the internal debates, and tensions that shaped their political transformations. The analysis highlights how these dynamics catalyzed a shift toward a radical Jotería approach to "otro mundo es posible," offering insight into movement-building strategies rooted in a new way of living outside, against, and within the control of the state.

"Black Queer World-Making in Afro-Peruvian Female Queer Hip Hop Artists"

Presenter: Pilar Caceras Cartagena, University of Texas at Austin

This paper explores how two Afro-Peruvian female queer artists, Yanna and Gilow, disrupt the local Hip Hop scene by challenging heteronormative, capitalist, and anti-Blackness. Through lyrical and visual analysis of "Millone\$" and "Carpe Diem," I argue that their art enacts Black queer world-making, imagining new possibilities for their being and their communities

1.3 Research Papers and Works-in-Progress: "Queer Latinx Formations Across Time and Space: Memory, State Power, and Transnational Resistance"

College of Education – Room 2147

"A Hopeful Transnational Mariposa"

Presenter: Juan Rios Vega, Bradley University

Drawing from Global South queer studies, queers of color (QOC) epistemologies, jotería studies, the author uses his transnational mariposa consciousness to document the narratives of self-identified gay men and trans women in his homeland of Panama. As part of a qualitative research study, the author uses autoethnography to analyze how being born different and a lack of supportive system, LGBT individuals in Panama become victims of homophobia, discrimination, heteronormativity, and hate crime.

"Mariposas Negras: On Afro-Jotería via an Intersectional, Decolonial, and Socio-historical Analysis"

Presenter: Luis Oswaldo Esparza, California State University, Northridge

This paper examines historical moments in which colonial rhetoric shaped hierarchies of racism, transphobia, and patriarchy, resulting in the repression, resistance, and identity formation of Jotería, Afro-descendants, and Afro-Jotería Rural. Analyzing discourses from the colonial era, Porfiriato, and Mexican Revolution, I draw intersections between gender, transnational sexuality, and Borderlands Theory. The study captures how successive waves of coloniality inform Afro-Jotería Rural repression and resistance, particularly among colonized subjects in rural Veracruz.

"Remembering the Latina Lesbian Breakfast: Norma Montellano, Food, and Activism"

Presenter: Joshua I. Lopez, University of North Texas

In this paper, I present a braided essay that weaves together historical narrative and memoir to tell a story about food as a powerful site of memory that challenges and transforms notions of activism and labor. In observing Norma Montellano's food practices, the tenacious memory of her life appears. Food articulates the inventive ways Montellano built community. Cooking and eating become political practices, and a practice within Montellano's activist repertoire.

1.4 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "¿Dónde Están Las Jotas? Writing Our Queer Chicana Selves Into the World Via Digital Zine"

College of Education – Room 2151

Presenters:

- MJ Hernandez, University of Arizona
- Guadalupe Ortega, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Diana Sanchez, University of California, Santa Barbara

Oftentimes, as queer Latina graduate students, we find ourselves being the only or the few. Asking ourselves: where are the other women? Where are the other *jotería*? Where are the other *jotas*, ambiguas, queer women, lesbians, sapphics, and *wlws*? We long for each other. We look for each other, hoping for an encounter. In this workshop, we seek to create a space *para platicar y crear juntas*. We want to create an intentional space where queer women can come together and reflect on their experiences being queer women in the academy, our homes, and beyond. For this workshop, we envision a space of co-creation and reflection with hopes of creating digital pages of a digital zine dedicated to the experiences of queer Chicane *femmes y mujeres*. We will be utilizing short reflective writing prompts to begin our *platica* and explore the potential topics folks want to include in the collaborative digital zine. Queer communities of color, especially Chicane/Latine queer women, have historically been overlooked in mainstream institutional archives, queer community archives, and the academy. Often, our stories have been continuously erased from public memory. Despite this, our community has a long history of documenting and creating together through practices like anthologies, such as *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* (1991), and zines, such as *Malflora Collective* (2025). This work wants to revisit these traditions of writing ourselves into the world via this creative collaborative project of our digital zine.

1.5 Storytelling Circles/Pláticas: "Grieving is Resistance: Reclaiming Dolor as Jotería Memory"

College of Education – Room 2155

Presenter: Cristian Alejandro Bracho, California State University, Long Beach

This storytelling/ *plática* session builds on the workshop I facilitated at the 2024 AJAAS Conference in Los Angeles. There, I explored the notion of *dolor*-grieving- as a joyful act. At that workshop, a large group of participants engaged in acts of remembrance, of storytelling, and of confession. Tears and laughter meshed into one another in a way that reminded me of the character Sixo in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Sixo, a slave at the Sweet Home plantation, would tell stories that would make listeners "cry-laugh"—pointing to the ways that stories of pain can evoke an ecstasy where joy and sadness blur into one another, where they are inseparable. This storytelling session asks its participants to reflect on the *dolor* we are all experiencing, moving away from a strict definition of *dolor* as grief over death (i.e., *duelo*) to the more universal idea that *dolor* is pain. And indeed, in 2025, the *jotería* is in *dolor*. In *Beloved*, characters like Sixo or the elder Baby Suggs reveal that storytelling, singing, and engaging in ecstatic praise are forms of resistance. I similarly call for reframing *dolor* as an act of resistance, of refusing to make our pain invisible. Actively expressing *dolor* defies efforts to erase the memories of those we have lost and to the injustices we have endured.

I.6 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: Queering Literature: How We Can Build Local Jotería Histories” College of Education – Room 3147

Presenter: Consuelo de Verano, Yucca Spike

Tools like independent journalism and zines can help to localize media for our communities. By making media accessible to the community, the dominant narrative's barrier can be broken down, and communities can tell their own stories. These records become our history and part of the foundation future generations can stand on.

I.7 Poster or Art Sessions: “Art as Spirituality and Queerness” UMFA (Room #1 and Room #2)

Presenter:

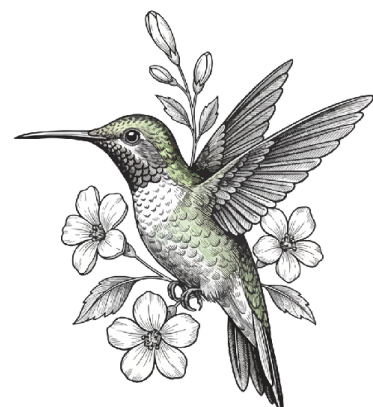
- Adrian Garcia, DeLuna Counseling and Art Therapy
- Noahloni Garcia, DeLuna Counseling and Art Therapy

Protecting the mental health of ourselves and our community is as important as it has ever been in the present political climate. Yet, mental health can sometimes feel like walking the colonizer right into our brain and allowing individualism and pathology to reign supreme. Join us as we explore and practice how to incorporate art and creativity into the language of healing; understanding our mental health needs while also centering our identities and cultural practices.

Presenter: Francisco Carrillo

La siguiente propuesta tiene como objetivo presentar el “Arte Queerxicano”, que nace de la investigación que estoy realizando para mi disertación doctoral. Con un inmenso respeto y responsabilidad quisiera desarrollar un diálogo interactivo sobre cuatro pinturas del artista Armando Sebastián, las cuales llevan por nombre: “Fotos y recuerdos”, “Elles el poder de las manos”, “Lets Come Together” y “Conversation in the Terrace”. Estas últimas tres obras son de la última colección que acaba de lanzar este junio de 2025 titulada “ELLES/All about them”. Para conseguir llevar a cabo este análisis, me apoyaré en la entrevista que le hice a la artista Queerxicano, en Dallas, Tejas. Por otro lado, me gustaría acentuar la representación y performance-performatividad que se desprenden de estas pinturas para así llegar a dimensionar y entender qué es el “Arte Queerxicano”.

Sessions resume after Lunch
and Plática with Celia
12:00PM – 2:30PM
(College of Education, Room 1151)



PLÁTICA: MAESTRA CELIA

Friday 1:00PM - 2:30PM. College of Education, Room 1151)



Celia Herrera Rodríguez, (Xicana/O'dami) is a queer visual artist and educator, whose practice reflects a multi-generational dialogue and engagement with Xicana[x], Indigenous Mexican and North American art, thought, spirituality, culture, and politics. She is co-founder and co-director (with Cherrie Moraga) of Las Maestras Center for Xicana Indigenous Thought and Art Praxis and is a Teaching Professor of Xicana Art Praxis in the Department of Chicana/x and Chicano Studies at UC Santa Barbara. In 2025, she retired from university teaching and returned to her hometown in Sacramento, CA to re-engage with her children, grand & great-grandchildren, family and communities and to focus on her art & spiritual praxis: Teo(tl)ria Xicana. In recent years her work has been exhibited nationally including The Oakland Museum of California Art; The Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis, CA; The Cheech Marin Center of Chicano Art and Culture, Riverside, CA; The Phoenix Art Museum, AZ; and The Perez Art Museum, Miami, FL.

2:45PM – 4:15PM

Concurrent Session #2

2.1 Film and Media Session: "From Bricks to Hammers: Embodying Resistance through Travesti Gestures" College of Education – Room 1151

Presenter: Xelestial Moreno-Luz

Our communities are producing cultural projects that appease liberal logics at the expense of the histories laid before us by our transgender ancestors. How can artists and scholars resist institutional queer liberal subjectivity to engage radical epistemologies? I turn to my collaborative art practice as a source that frames trans bodies. I expand on my theory of the travesti-gesture, to illustrate a praxis that explores fugitivity, desire, and community building outside a liberal paradigm.

2.2 Research Papers and Works-in-Progress: "Remembering Otherwise: Queer Latinx Texts, Motherhood, and Masculinity" College of Education – Room 1145

"Rooted in Memory: Love, Refusal, and Queer Survival in Chicanx and Latinx AIDS Literature"

Presenter: Jorge Estrada, California State University, Fullerton

This presentation examines how writers such as Arturo Islas, Gil Cuadros, Michael Nava, and Reinaldo Arenas transform the pain and stigma of the AIDS crisis into stories of love, care, and survival. Their work reveals how queer Chicanx and Latinx communities use storytelling as resistance—refusing erasure, sustaining memory, and transforming grief into creativity. Rooted in love and refusal, these texts affirm queer survival as an enduring act of remembrance and resilience.

"La Madre del Maricón: The Queer Performance of Motherhood in The House of Impossible Beauties"

Presenter: X. Ramos Lara, UNC-Chapel Hill

In this paper I examine the queer structures of motherhood in Joseph Cassara's 2018 novel *The House of Impossible Beauties*, which fictionalizes the foundations of the House of Xtravaganza in the New York City ballroom scene. Drawing upon performance theories of non-whiteness and psychoanalytic thought, I critique normative idealizations of motherhood, arguing that motherhood finds its most imaginative abilities in the wake of genocidal violence (e.g., the AIDS epidemic in the novel).

"What the Desert Witnessed: A Rural Borderlands Queer Remembering"

Presenter: Edward (Lalo) Rivera Camacho, San Diego State University

This autoethnographic presentation centers the lived experiences of rural, Queer, Chicanx youth from the desert borderlands. Challenging the urban focus of queer studies, it positions the desert as a witness and sanctuary. Through personal narrative, poetry, and theory, it explores intersections of queerness, rurality, and brownness, revealing stories of pain, resilience, and joy. This work aims to shift marginalized rural queer of color experiences from the periphery to the center of academic discourse.

"Queering Machismo: Locas Afán"

Presenter: Stephanie Colin, Northeastern University

This presentation puts Juan Gabriel and Pedro Lemebel into conversation with each other through their embodiment of queering machismo through varying mediums. Through an analysis of their different performativities resisting heteronormative machista regulations the conversation between these two artists will be further interpolated. Juan Gabriel and Pedro Lemebel give us methods and tools to refute machismo and control. Their artistry is a roadmap and legacies to follow.

2.3 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Blooming through Burlesque: A Burlesque and Sensual Movement Workshop" College of Education – Room 2147

Presenter: Xochii de la Noche

'Blooming through Burlesque' is an all-levels, all gender interactive dance workshop in the art of the tease and sensual movement taught by the bruja of play and pleasure Xochii de la Noche. We will briefly cover the history of burlesque, the legacy of Latine burlesque artists past and present, and then move into learning a few foundational burlesque moves along with a short choreography!

2.4 "Radical Autonomous Spaces in Organizing and Education" College of Education – Room 2151

Presenters:

- Anita Rangel, California State University Los Angeles
- Jose Anguiano, California State University Los Angeles
- Alejandro Padilla, California State University Los Angeles
- Lorissa Tercero, Community Member

This session explores the way educators/organizers practice Resistance Pedagogies within the colonial education system to create radical autonomous spaces for the purpose of community, advocacy, and resources for marginalized students of color. The panelists will discuss their methods and experiences followed by a guided exercise to stimulate a discussion and visualization of what radical autonomous spaces can look like for each audience member.



2.5 "Nostredad, a hemispheric project of refusal, love, and rising"

College of Education – Room 3147

Presenters:

- Suyapa Portillo Villeda, Pitzer College
- Marlene Wayar, President of Futuro Trans
- PJ DiPietro, Syracuse University

This panel examines nostredad as a hemispheric, embodied project linking jotería and travesti-trans communities, rooted in resistant histories of denormalizing kinship. Analyzing "pedagogies of refusal, loving, and rising," we present the "América Transgénerx / América Transgender" roundtable as a case study. It highlights collective sense-making, resistance against the politics of death, and challenges academic distortion of travesti-trans and jotería theories across Abya Yala.

2.6 Mapping Jotería Cannabis Spaces: Storytelling through an ArcGIS StoryMaps

College of Education – Room 2155

Presenter: Magaly Ordonez, University of Utah

2.7 Film and Media Session/Poster or Art Session: "Central American Unicorns in Space! A Queer Digital Odyssey / Rage Zine" UMFA (Room #1 and Room #2)

"Central American Unicorns in Space! A Queer Digital Odyssey" **Presenter:** Maya Chinchilla, San Francisco State University

"Rage Zine" **Presenter:** Ethan Molina, California State University, Northridge

4:30PM – 6:00PM

Concurrent Session #3

3.1 Storytelling Circles/Pláticas: "Starting Whistle: Creative and Embodied Acts of Queer Chicanx/Latinx Resistance" College of Education – Room 1151

Presenter: Eve Sanchez, California State University Los Angeles

This film session will screen Starting Whistle, a short documentary that follows Nightmaren, a trans Latina roller derby skater that explores the intersection of gender, sports, and power. Following the film scholar and director, Eve Sanchez, will share on the creative process, diving into Nightmaren's story, and analyze striking roller derby lessons as acts of queer world-making.

3.2 Research Papers and Works-in Progress: "Jotería Studies at the Crossroads: Consciousness, Archives, and Radical Critique" College of Education – Room 1145

"Toward a Jotería Consciousness"

Presenter: Daniel Enrique Pérez, University of Nevada, Reno

This research presentation centers on the role Jotería consciousness plays in shaping Jotería identity and world-making. It explores the way Jotería individuals come to an understanding of who they are, who their people are, and how they experience the world. The researcher proposes Jotería consciousness as a decolonial site of resistance where people with queer and Latinx identities formulate a collective consciousness, building communities and engaging in acts of refusal.

"On the Politics of Recovery in Jotería Studies: Queering the Islas Archive"

Presenter: Nicholas Duron, Meredith College

Drawing from archival research in the Arturo Islas Papers and a close reading of *The Rain God*, this paper examines the affective politics of archival recovery in Jotería and Queer Latinx studies. I argue that efforts to recuperate a coherent queer Chicana/x subject from the archive risk misreading both Islas and queerness itself. Instead, I trace how *The Rain God* and its archive mobilize feeling lost as a critical affect shaping queer Chicano relationality.

"Jotería of Color Critique: White Epistemologies, Barrio Closet Ontologies, and the Carnalerotics of Chicano Cultural Nationalism"

Presenter: Michael Andrew Parra, University of California, Santa Barbara

This chapter offers a meta-critical reading of José Esteban Muñoz's *Disidentifications* to establish jotería of color critique. It argues that Muñoz's alignment with white queer theory departs from women of color epistemologies, reproducing hegemonic academic logics. Re-situating disidentification within genealogies of women of color theory, the chapter foregrounds embodied knowledge, closet epistemologies of color, and introduces carnalerotics as a methodology for analyzing queer masculinities and Chicano cultural nationalism.

3.3 "Crucé La Frontera en Tacones: Author, Translator, & Scholar Roundtable"

College of Education – Room 2147

Presenters:

- Manuel Cuellar, George Washington University
- Omi Salas-SantaCruz, University of Utah
- Alexandra Rodríguez De Ruíz, Author, Consultant, and Translatina Activist
- Marcia Ochoa, UC Santa Cruz
- Jadine Pluecker, Independent Translator & Language Worker

This roundtable features a reading of excerpts from the memoir *Crucé la Frontera en Tacones / I Crossed the Border in High Heels* by Alexandra Rodríguez de Ruíz, and a discussion of the process to write the memoir in Spanish and translate it into English.

3.4 Storytelling Circles/Pláticas: "Rooted Rituals: Ancestral Herbal Knowledge and Collective Healing within Queer Chicana/x Jotería World-Making"

College of Education – Room 2151

Presenters:

- Priscilla Cuellar, California State University, Los Angeles
- Makaela Kai Wright, Founder of SoulQuenching Teas

This session explores how queer Chicana/x communities engage ancestral herbal knowledge and ritual as pathways to healing and spiritual restoration. Co-facilitated by scholar Priscilla Cuellar and taste sensory spiritualist Makaela of SoulQuenching Teas, this session integrates decolonial theory, tea ceremony, and collective reflection. Participants will experience how land-based and sensory practices nurture remembrance, resistance, and community care within jotería world-making.

3.5 Storytelling Circles/Pláticas: "Jotería Archismes: Memory, Desire, and Relationality Rooted in Chisme" College of Education – Room 2155

Presenters:

- University of Utah: Ellie Estrada, Cydney Caradonna, Luz M. Carreño, Mitzi Ceballos, Cha McNeil.
- Ángel de Jesus González, Fresno State University
- Sergio A. Gonzalez, University of Pittsburgh
- Roberto C. Orozco, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities

This panel utilizes a "chisme session" style of engaging Jotería histories through what Deborah Vargas calls an archisme, or archive of chisme, as a queer methodology for registering difference in a borderlands imaginary and historicizing the gestures which produce queer and Latiné/x knowledge. Archives of chisme simultaneously attend to the silences between narratives and presences which shape non-canonical constructions of Jotería histories. Across crammed apartments, whisper networks, and group chats, chisme charts the processual aspects of relationality across etymological, folkish, and epistemological touchpoints. By engaging these archismes through dialogue, storytelling, and performance, panelists examine the different ways that desire, power, and memory scaffold Jotería archismes in academic spaces, non-academic communities, relationship structures, and everyday life.

3.6 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Reading Trans Diasporic Poetics" College of Education – Room 3147

Presenter: Marco Antonio Huerta Alardín, California State University, Bakersfield

This reading workshop invites participants to engage collectively with the poetry of trans diasporic writers such as Alan Pelaez Lopez and Roque Raquel Salas Rivera. Through close reading and discussion, participants will explore how these poets imagine trans futurities, diasporic belonging, and refusal as modes of survivance. The session foregrounds collaborative interpretation and embodied engagement, aligning with AJAAS's themes of queer and trans pleasure, resistance, and creative expression.

3.7 Spoken Word / Film Session: "Objetos de [des]amor" College of Education – Room 3151

Presenter: Juan Antonio Trujillo, Oregon State University

Born from the ashes of covid-era grief, *Objetos de [des]amor: Loss and Longing Through a Godless Queer Chicano Lens* (Trujillo, 2024) adopts an expansive, Anzaldúa-inspired approach to queer memoir. Using a blend of prose, poetry and photographic images of collected sentimental objects, *Objetos* is a vulnerable exploration of intersectional queer Latino ex-Mormon experience informed by autoethnographic methodology and deep personal reflection on the nature of loss and desire for connection.

3.8 Rooted in Collective Memory, Blooming through Storytelling, Rising in Love and Refusal

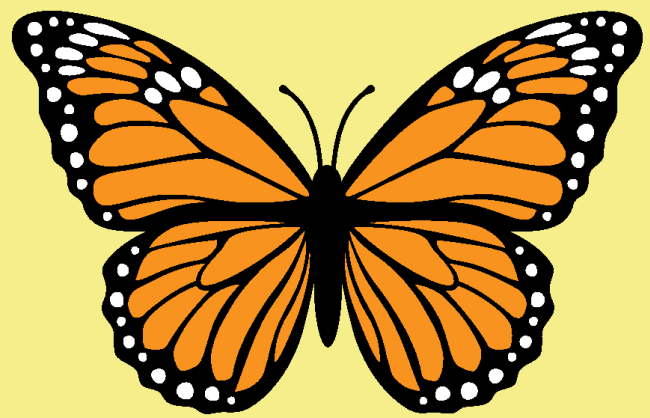
College of Education – Room 3155

Presenters: Daniel Romero-Guerrero, Carina Linares, Oasis Perez (Rev Love Media)

This workshop explores how we honor ourselves as living archives through embodied history and memory, and how we continue rising, organizing, and blooming within modern day frameworks and systems. Through interactive journal prompts and collective art, we will look at how we have, continue, and remember our feminist, indigeneity and decolonial practices.

Saturday

March 21st , 2026



Saturday, March 21st, 2026

Location: College of Education 1721 Campus Center Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

8:30AM – 4:00PM

Registration and Check-In

College of Education, Room 1151

9:00AM – 9:30AM

Breakfast (Sponsored by Culture Coffee, SLC)

College of Education, Room 1151

9:30AM – 10:25AM

Welcome by Co-Chairs Ex-Officio

College of Education, Room 1151

10:30AM – 12:00PM

Concurrent Session #4

4.1 Research Papers and Works-in-Progress: "Queer Politics of Care: Nepantla, Liminality, and Jotería Consciousness" College of Education – Room 1145

"Love Laws and Liminal Bodies: Nepantla as Healing"

Presenter: Berenice Rodriguez, Loyola University Chicago

In this paper, I draw on "nepantla" as a decolonial feminist approach to healing, examining states of being and identity formation through the concept of existing in a constructed world shaped by lived reality and a state of in-betweenness that lies beyond it. I then examine how "nepantla" manifests in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, revealing how Rahel and Estha's relationship exposes liminal spaces of resistance, agency, and affect.

"Bread, Sanctuary, Solidarity: Queer Politics of Care and Resistance in a Chicago Squat"

Presenter: Cecilia Peña Rasgado, University of Illinois at Chicago

This ethnographic study examines the lived experiences of queer, undocumented migrants from South and Central America who occupied an abandoned Chicago church known as The Orphanage until their displacement in 2025. Centering a queer lesbian migrant, it analyzes squatting as collective resistance to immigration, housing, and policing regimes. Through mutual aid, chosen kinship, and the Comedor Colectivo, residents transformed care, food, and home-making into political practices asserting belonging, survival, and freedom within contested urban space.

"Colombian Crossroads, Blooming Beyond the Cracks"

Presenter: Jaime Rodríguez, California State University, Los Angeles

This project explores the experiences of Colombian, LGBTQ+ individuals living in Medellín, Colombia, alongside those of LGBTQ+ Colombian Americans across the diaspora living in Los Angeles. My Masters thesis project, Colombian Crossroads focuses on the ways that LGBTQ+ Colombian identities are impacted and influenced by migration, administration policy and language, which causes omission of some identities publicly and a hierarchical rotation of other identities as a means of assimilation, resistance and safety.

"Nepantla and Decolonial Healing in Marginalized communities"

Presenter: Alvaro Ramirez, California State University, Los Angeles

Rooted in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Nepantla* and in dialogue with Therí A. Pickens's *Black Madness*, this presentation weaves poetry and scholarship to explore the in-between as a site of healing, refusal, and radical love. Challenging colonial notions of sanity and wholeness, *Nepantla* emerges as a living philosophy where contradiction becomes creation. Through poetic reflection and critical expansion, these interventions affirm marginalized ways of being and imagine decolonial futures grounded in collective care and resistance.

4.2 Panel: "Local Voices in Bloom: Locating a Queer and Latiné Praxis in the Salt Lake Valley and Westside" College of Education, Room 1151

Presenters:

- Ellie Estrada, University of Utah
- Graciela Maria Campos, Existimos
- Pati Campos, Existimos
- Wisam Khudair, University Neighborhood Partners
- Westside Brown Berets SLV
- B Amenero, Independent Organizer
- Nuanua Collective
- Mecha de U of U
- Natanael Choi, Unidxs
- Miguel Trujillo, University Neighborhood Partners
- West Side Community Review Board
- Nico Lockheart, UAF Legacy Health
- Nalo Filizola Ruiz, YWCA



This panel brings together voices who are actively engaged in coalitional work in the local Salt Lake Valley and Westside. In an era where the current presidential administration is working to defund, delegitimize, and disappear our communities, we locate the roots of a *Jotería* praxis in local organizing. This discussion primarily centers topics of importance to the Westside community: capacity-building, coalitional activism, immigration, environmental stewardship, and mental health, to name a few. As *Jotería* do, our intersectional approach welcomes organizations that engage in coalitional work which is queer and/or Latiné/x.

4.3 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Platicarte & Artemonio: Decolonial Arte Community Methodology for Healing, Memory, and Resistance" College of Education – Room 2147

Presenters:

- Paloma Andazola-Reza, Pacifica Graduate Institute
- Winsor Kinkade, Pacifica Graduate Institute

This interactive workshop invites participants into artemedicina—arte as medicine that grounds, heals, and connects us to land, community, and ancestral knowledge, and creates pathways of resistance. Through platicarte (plática + arte) and artemonio (arte + testimonio), we engage decolonial arts praxis as collective healing and world-making. Participants will explore, define, and practice these methodologies through dialogue, art-making, and plurilogue, co-creating living archives that honor memory, *jotería* lives, and intergenerational survivance.

4.4 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Bridging Futurities: Intergenerational Healing and Horizontal Learning for Collective Accountability and Sustaining Jotería Futures" College of Education – Room 2151

Presenters:

- Reyes Reynaga, University of New Mexico
- Bailey Rutherford, University of New Mexico
- Frankie Flores, University of New Mexico

How do we build AJAAS futures that honor all voices? This workshop—led by the inaugural collegiate chapter at UNM—creates a space for intergenerational conversation, reflection, and creative collaboration. This process will spotlight strategies for community growth, strengthen undergraduate and emerging scholar support, and cultivate ongoing structures of accountability that strengthen national bonds and enable active expansion across campuses. Participants will co-create a zine mapping our shared commitments to love, community care, and transformative mentorship.

4.5 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Re-Animating Chingonismx and The Phallic Tongue" College of Education – Room 2155

Presenters: Serina Payan Hazelwood, Prescott College

This experiential workshop re-animates Chingonismx through the phallic tongue as a site of ancestral knowledge, erotic sovereignty, and refusal. Participants engage in somatic awareness, meditation, voice-tuning, and collective sound-painting to explore how the tongue connects the deep front line of the body, mouth, heart, and pelvis to land and lineage. Blending anatomy, ceremony, and improvisational soundwork, the session disrupts and disrespects respectability politics, transforming silence into collective vibration, memory, and liberation.

4.6 Storytelling Circles/Pláticas/Panel: "Rooted in the Valley: Rurality of Place, Power, and Belonging" College of Education – Room 3151

"Rooted in the Valley, Blooming in Refusal: A Rural Chicanx Journey toward Mariposa Consciousness"

Presenter: Arturo Anaya Servin, University of San Diego

This session draws from ethnographic storytelling rooted in rural California to explore love, refusal, and transformation in queer Chicanx life. Through a wedding narrative and plática, I reflect on my developing mariposa consciousness as a practice of healing and connection. Guided by Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Pérez, and Delgado Bernal, this work situates rural jotería experiences within LatCrit and rural sociology, revealing how tenderness, silence, and care become acts of resistance and love.

"Jotería Rural: Stories of Place, Power, and Belonging"

Presenters:

- Ángel de Jesus González, Fresno State University
- Carlos Lucatero, Bakersfield College
- Jacob Sandoval, Fresno State University
- Favián Ramírez Arizaga, Fresno State University

Drawing from Jotería Studies, this panel explores how queer and trans Latinx/a/o people from rural contexts engage in worldmaking and belonging within, across, and beyond higher education. Panelists theorize rural Jotería as both a lived and scholarly project of survival, joy, and transformation.

4.7 Panel: "Queerida & Lloronequis: Liberated Love and Sacred Tears as Methodologies of Healing and Collective Liberation" College of Education – Room 3155

Presenter: Diana Anzaldúa, Pacifica Graduate Institute

This presentation explores Queerida and Lloronequis as decolonial methodologies within Jotería life, centering love and grief as practices of healing, refusal, and collective liberation. Queerida reclaims belovedness as a queer political ethic that sustains kinship and joy, while Lloronequis honors crying as sacred, ancestral medicine. Drawing from queer Chicana feminist lineages, the work positions liberated love and sacred tears as intertwined practices that heal wounded ecologies and imagine collective flourishing.



Sessions will resume after Lunch

12:00PM – 1:30PM

On Your Own

1:45PM – 3:15PM

Concurrent Session #5

5.1 Research Papers and Works-in-Progress: "Queer and Trans Movements of the Self" College of Education – Room 1145

"Susto Sanctuarios: Towards a Method of Trans/Immigrant Sanctuary Meaning Making"

Presenters:

- Ellie Estrada, University of Utah
- Annie Isabel Fukushima

This essay introduces *sustos sanctuarios* as a decolonial feminist method for engaging the coalitional, relational, and affective polemics of flight and fright that undergird narratives of trans and immigrant sanctuary. In 2025, the praxis of sanctuary has been complicated by several issues: greater ICE-police collaboration in sanctuary cities, the defunding of academic research concerning gender and race, and the growing presence of a deputized citizenry. We utilize *susto sanctuarios* to rethink sanctuary making as a theory and praxis, inviting readers to feel their way through the dark, slowly navigating, to find a way to connect with the lived, imagined, and embodied experiences of transgender, migratory, Indigenous, and BIPOC, communities who seek to create placemaking in contexts that are hostile, even deadly. Our synthesized voice seeks to capture the effect of campfire-like "scary stories" to contend with the ways trans and immigrant lives move, live, and navigate safety. Our use of *susto sanctuarios* narrativizes dynamics of fright, resistance, and escape inherent to sanctuary stories: from the perceptive danger of walking streets alone, to the unsettling elaboration of trans bathroom enforcement, to the gripping uncertainty of a haunting.

"Transgender Precarity: Within Immigration and Migration Enforcement and Practicing Everyday Abolition"

Presenter: Alejandra Portillos, Regis University

I examine trans-precarity within immigration and migration enforcement, exemplified through Kelly Gonzalez Aguilar's experiences, a Honduran trans woman who was detained for over 1,000 days in multiple US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities. In this article, I use a multi-method approach to connect Aguilar's case study to the larger social, cultural, and political landscape of Latinx experiences with ICE detention and deportation. I argue that trans-precarity is shaped by race, sex, gender, and ability scripts that cause harm experienced by Aguilar and, more generally, queer and trans Black, Indigenous, and Latinx asylum seekers. This case study of Aguilar's experience contributes to an understanding of everyday abolition, rooted in radical care, practiced by Aguilar, national campaign members from the Trans Liberation Crew, and community efforts working against the deportation machine.

"Ilimitadas: Reclaiming Space in the Archive for the Grupo Ação Lésbica Feminista (GALF)'s Chanacomchana zines"

Presenter: Lucia Urdaneta, University of Florida

This project examines the political organization, erotic expression, and identity formation of Brazilian leftist lesbians through Chanacomchana, a twelve-volume zine series produced during Brazil's democratic transition. Using archival research and improved OCR translation methods, the study documents how lesbians articulated pleasure, resistance, and community while contesting marginalization within broader gay movements. Grounded in the author's positionality, the research highlights the importance of lesbian archives for understanding queer political histories and intergenerational activism in Brazil.

5.2 Panel: "Muxerista–Jotería Praxis and Futures: Activism and Scholarship as Resistance and Restoration" College of Education, Room 1151

Presenters:

- Roberto C. Orozco, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities
- Anita Revilla, California State University, Los Angeles
- Joanna Nuñez, Sacramento State University
- Briceida Hernandez-Toledo, University of California, Los Angeles

In this session, presenters share how they enact Muxerista–Jotería pedagogical framings in their research and activist praxis. Panelists will draw from diverse research and community contexts—including racial geographies, student activist practices, embodied classroom leadership, and intergenerational knowledge—to explore the assertion of Muxerista consciousness. This session invites us to reflect on how Muxerista frameworks deepen our commitments to justice, solidarity, and collective liberation in the pursuit of futures and possibilities for education research and practice.

5.3 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Blooming through Teatro: Queer/ Two Spirit Kinship, Love and Storytelling as Resistance" College of Education – Room 2147

Presenter: Maribel Martinez, Local Artist / San Jose State University

Theatrical solo performance is a way of analyzing narrative that invites the audience to make their own connections to the content and to the broader messages of the work. Celebrating the role of creative expression in sustaining jotería communities, these pieces explore questioning and grief as part of the process of self-exploration and self-actualization while creating kinship, demonstrating love, and sharing storytelling as acts of resistance. Through personal and collective stories enacted by solo performance, “Post-Post Pre Party Ritual” and “TwoSprit” investigate love’s function as political, relational, and spiritual.

5.4 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: “Esta Carta de Amor es Para Ti” College of Education – Room 2151

Presenter: Cuauhtemoc Salinas Martell, Loyola Marymount University

Drawing from my dissertation *Esta Carta de Amor es Para Ti*, this session uses autoethnography and testimonio to explore the survival strategies of undocumented students in higher education. Rooted in love and refusal, participants will engage in storytelling, reflective writing, and collective dialogue to reimagine education as a space for healing and liberation. Together, we will honor undocumented resilience while envisioning transformative practices grounded in jotería memory and world-making.

5.5 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: “One Night of Grief: Using Necronarratives to Refuse Death of Queer Pleasure” College of Education – Room 2155

Presenters:

- Geidy Mendez, University of California, Irvine
- Angelica Calderon, The City College of New York

How can necronarratives facilitate a forum of queer grief that one experiences in pleasure and intimacy? In this workshop, we invite participants to re-member past and current experiences of intimacy and pleasure. We frame these moments in a timeline of grief that engages with Latin American and Caribbean studies, queer necropolitics, and Black existentialism. Through a series of activities, participants will use breathwork, letter writing, and sound to conduct necronarratives to communicate queer grief.

5.6 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: “The Tender Work of Writing: Rituals for Refusal and Renewal” College of Education – Room 3147

Presenter: Andrea Preza, University of Utah

This workshop invites participants to engage writing as a decolonial and spiritual practice of love, refusal, and resistance. Drawing on Gloria Anzaldúa's essay, “Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers,” we will use writing prompts, rituals of breath, and collective reflection to explore how writing can heal, unsettle, and transform. Participants will create personal writing altars and reconnect with the ancestral, emotional, and interlectual lineages that guide their work within and beyond academia.



5.7 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Arte Queerencia: A decolonial alterity and platicarte for (re)membering, (re)riting, & archiving queer herencias" College of Education – Room 3151

Presenter: Paloma Andazola-Reza, Pacifica Graduate Institute

Queerencia is a queering of the term querencia, a praxis of embodied-spirit connection to land-waters, community, cultura, and ancestor guidance that queer-cyphers and roots us whole. Queerencia is a homing, a healing, and archiving project (re)membering queer-stories into herencias. Using platicarte (art pláticas) methodology, we tend to the queer-colonality that persists in our cuentos herencias, and call the jotería back from exile, emerging to (re)write and (re)rite what Otherwise exists within queer herencia territorios.

5.8 Panel: "Sometimes Santas, Sometimes Putas, Pero Always Femmes y Luego Algo Mas" College of Education – Room 3155

Presenters:

- Diana Sanchez, University of California, Santa Barbara
- MJ Hernandez, University of Arizona
- Guadalupe Ortega, University of California, Santa Barbara

This panel seeks to discuss how femme-ness works as a form of Chicana/e and Latine/a visual, embodied resistance, defiance, and a site for dreaming of tomorrows that decenter men, masculinity, and androcentrism. We consider how hyper femme-inity, femme fat, and Latine femme lesbians complicate racialized and gendered expectations. We engage with femme performance as an imaginative practice of defiance and world-making beyond the patriarchy, respectability, and cisheteronormativity. Our dialogue centers on the femme aesthetic as a politic and aesthetic.

3:30PM – 5:00PM

Concurrent Session #6

6.1 Research Papers and Works-in-Progress: "Examining Queer and Trans Latinx Educational Experiences: Leadership, Literature, and Data" College of Education – Room 1145

"Beyond the Binary, Beyond the Institution: Queering HSIs"

Presenter: Yolanda Cataño, California State University System

This in-progress session introduces the Queering HSIs Framework, a transformative approach that redefines servingness beyond racialized and binary logics. Grounded in Cataño and González's (2021) study of LGBTQ+ Latinx students, the framework integrates queer theory and LatCrit to reimagine HSIs as spaces of radical love, refusal, and resistance. Through pláticas, dialogue, and collective mapping, participants will explore queerness and servingness as a liberatory praxis of belonging and institutional transformation.

"Identity and Education: How Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo and Erika L. Sanchez Influenced Our Dreams"

Presenter: Laraine Perez, California State University, Dominguez Hills

This study examines how Chicana literary narratives influence graduate students' educational aspirations and resistance practices. Grounded in Critical Race Theory, Chicana Feminist Epistemology, and Pedagogies of the Home, it analyzes key texts by Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, and Erika L. Sánchez through Content Discourse Analysis. The research shows how these novels validate Chicana lived experiences, cultivate familial, linguistic, and racial capital, and support mentorship, shaping identity, resilience, and persistence within inequitable educational pipelines.

"Embodied Intersectional Leadership: Rooted in Love, Blooming through Refusal, Rising in Resistance"

Presenter: Michelle L. Lopez, University of San Diego

This presentation introduces Embodied Intersectional Leadership (EIL), a framework grounded in Chicana feminist praxis and *jotería* knowledge. EIL challenges colonial leadership models by centering love as praxis, refusal as survival, and resistance as transformation. Drawing on ancestral lineages, spiritual activism, and embodied knowing, I explore how decolonial teaching models and community-engaged projects transform classrooms into healing-centered, justice-rooted spaces. This work honors AJAAS's quinceañera by celebrating love as a generative guide for resistance, rootedness, and future-building.

"Examining Queer and Trans Latinx Students through a QuantCrit Jotería Lens"

Presenter: Mario I. Suárez, Utah State University

The present study uses QuantCrit, QueerQuant, and *jotería* studies to analyze data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009. This descriptive study use of the richness of the data set to explore what the lives of these 240 QT Latinx students looks like and identify pockets where resistance is occurring at different levels (e.g., individual/student, parents, teacher, counselor, administrator, school).

6.2 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Transfronterizx Jotería: Possibilities of an AJAAS Conference in Mexico (and Elsewheres)" College of Education, Room 1151

Presenters:

- Luis Oswaldo Esparza, California State University, Northridge
- Xamuel Bañales, California State University, Stanislaus
- Juan Ríos Vega, Bradley University
- Alexandra R. DeRuiz, Académica y activista
- Omi Salas-SantaCruz, University of Utah
- Mario Marín, Universidad de Guadalajara
- Ángel de Jesus González, Fresno State University



This roundtable gathers Jotería transfronterizx scholar-activists from across the Americas to imagine and discuss the possibility of hosting a future AJAAS conference in Mexico. Rooted in love, reciprocity, and hemispheric solidarity, participants build upon ongoing transnational dialogues and community collaborations. Drawing on Anzaldúa, Muñoz, Lugones, and Dussel, presenters explore how Global South epistemologies inform Jotería praxis and collective world-making across borders (Anzaldúa, 1987; Dussel, 1993; Lugones, 2010; Muñoz, 1999).

6.3 Panel: "The JOTA Anthology: A Discussion and Reading" College of Education – Room 2147

Presenters:

- Rita E. Urquijo-Ruiz, Trinity University
- Anel I. Flores, Independent Scholar/Artist
- Anita Revilla, California State University, Los Angeles
- Maya Chinchilla, San Francisco State University

JOTA: A Queer Latina y Latinx Anthology is a landmark collection of over 70 queer writers and artists. It builds on previous Chicana/Latina anthologies by boldly asserting our identity and honoring our current written and visual stories. This roundtable consists of an introduction to our book and reading.

6.4 Roundtable: "Jotería Studies in Communication: A Rhetoric of Love, Resistance, and Collective Thriving" College of Education – Room 2151

Presenters:

- Leandra H. Hernández, University of Utah
- Eleanor "Ellie" Estrada, University of Utah
- Robert Gutierrez-Perez, California State University, San Marcos
- Raisa Fernanda Alvarado, California State University, San Bernardino
- Stephanie L. Gomez, Western Washington University

- Gabrielle Yvonne Garza, University of Utah
- Raquel Moreira, University of Maryland, College Park
- Sara Baugh-Harris, Davidson College

This roundtable explores how Jotería Studies, through the lens of Communication Studies, offers a unique framework for understanding rhetorical strategies of resistance and community building. We will examine how jotería communities use communication to preserve cultural memory, challenge oppressive narratives, and build solidarity. The session will highlight practices of digital storytelling, art, and public discourse that are rooted in love, blooming through refusal, and rising in resistance, affirming the central role of communication in securing our collective future.

6.5 Roundtable: "Pleasure as Resistance and Empowerment: Reflections on Leather, Kink, and Embodiment" College of Education – Room 2155

Presenters:

- Eddy Alvarez Jr., California State University, Fullerton
- Alfonso Ayala III, University of Texas at Austin
- Hazel Ali Zaman Gonzalez, Pacific Lutheran University
- Stefanía García, University of Texas at Austin

The body is a site of memory, pleasure, and resistance. Inspired by the work of black and brown folks immersed in the leather, kink and furry communities, this roundtable will focus on the role of embodiment, desire, space, crip visibility, community, and empowerment in the participant's lives both inside and outside academia. Through vulnerability, reflection, and research, using testimonio and what Gloria Anzaldúa calls auto-historia teorías, we will share about the origins and development of our personal and/or scholarly relationships to leather, kink, and furry identities and communities. We will address the meanings of our bodies in these alternative "skins" and space, the importance of the garments or gear we wear, the racialized and gendered dynamics, and the stigma, but also liberation, associated with these spaces. The roundtable will consist of several rounds of questions among the participants and then a discussion with those guests in attendance. We invite everyone to wear their leather, kink, and furry gear.

6.6 Interactive and Informative Workshops and Tutorials: "Archives of Becoming: Strategies and Reflections for Life-Affirming Archival Practices" College of Education – Room 3147

Presenters:

- Sam DeLaCruz, California State University, Bakersfield
- D Solis, California State University, Bakersfield
- Katie Goree, Kern LGBTQ+ Community Archive

In this interactive workshop, participants are invited to reflect on their own community formations as well as their own personal and community histories that have brought them to this present moment. After a brief discussion and reflection on the simultaneous importance and pitfalls of archiving our histories and memories, participants will practice different archival strategies. To end, we will discuss what was successful about these strategies and what could be enhanced or reimagined further.

6.6 Storytelling Circles/Pláticas: "Healing the Collective: Resisting Disappearance Through Co-generational Plática, Collective Reflection, & Collective Commitment to Storytelling" College of Education – Room 3151

Presenters:

- Nalo Filizola Ruiz, December Knight, Delia Arellano, Kaile Akina, Sara Palomino, and Joél Arvizo-Zavala.

This project is a story about six QTBIPOC community co-researchers whose shared work lasted two years. Researchers represent a range of communities: Native Hawaiian, Latinx/a/o/e, Black; bisexual, lesbian, gay, transgender, & Queer. Throughout the project, this group defied the boundaries of their contract and nurtured bonds of radical trust, commitment, and connection, where gender identities bloomed, queer curiosities became rooted in experience, and where loss and growth were mourned and celebrated in community.

6.7 Artistic Performance: "llegar hasta donde" College of Education – Room 3155

Presenter: Stephanie Colin, Northeastern University

This audio performance will be available through a QR Code or during a panel where it will be played for attendees to listen through the languages, voice, words slashing against the ear upholding machista perspectives. This performance will draw on many of the conference themes, specifically: "Music, Art, and Storytelling as Resistance: Celebrating the role of creative expression in sustaining jotería communities." This sound installation recites and meanders within the traffic congestion that transgresses the interstate scopes of the mind listening. The phrase in the beginning "El hombre llega hasta donde la mujer le permite" introduces the merge into the poetic voices for it articulates the first interaction with machismo. Machismo es aquello que define estructuras heteronormativas of what is masculinity and places heavier emphasis on male roles in societal structures. The two voices and languages that guide the listener are meant to translate and cause friction in the auditory capacities as they trade spaces in recognition and understanding. Listeners are invited to take comfort in the friction of the two languages and enjoy the moment when the English-speaking voice catches up to the Spanish speaking one in the performance's closing remarks.

Saturday Sessions End

6:00PM - 9:00PM

Dinner (will be provided)

Queerceañera at the

Alumni House

155 South Central Campus Drive



AJAAS

SATURDAY MARCH 21ST. 2026
ALUMNI HOUSE 155 SOUTH CENTRAL CAMPUS DRIVE



QUEERCEAÑERA

5:30 - 6:00 PM ARRIVAL

6:00-7:00 PM DINNER

6:30- 7:00 PM RECOGNITIONS &
PERFORMANCES

7:00 - 9:00 PM DANCING



MC BY
CVNTCEAL'D GARRIE

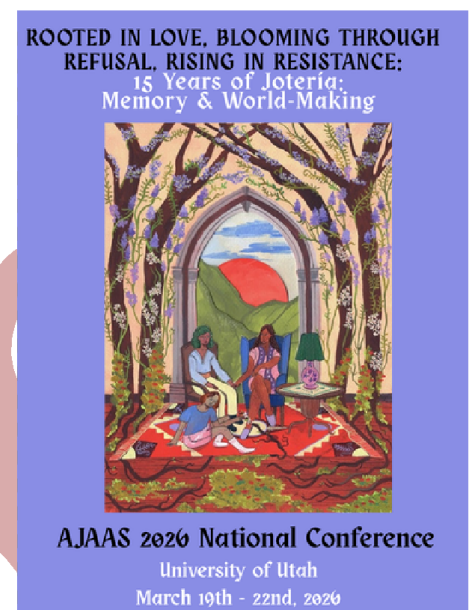
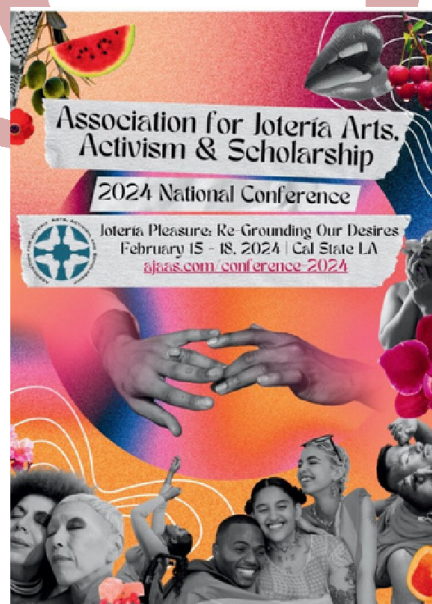
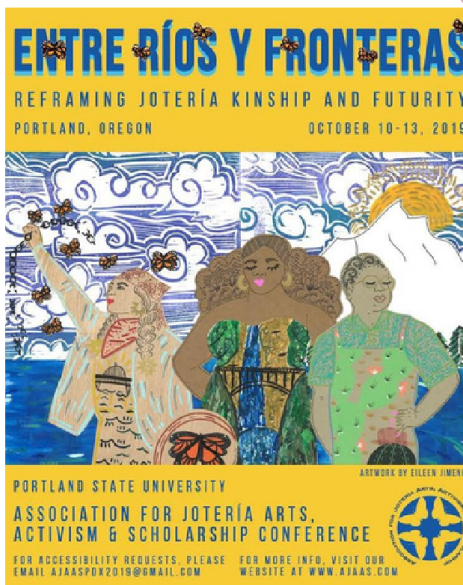
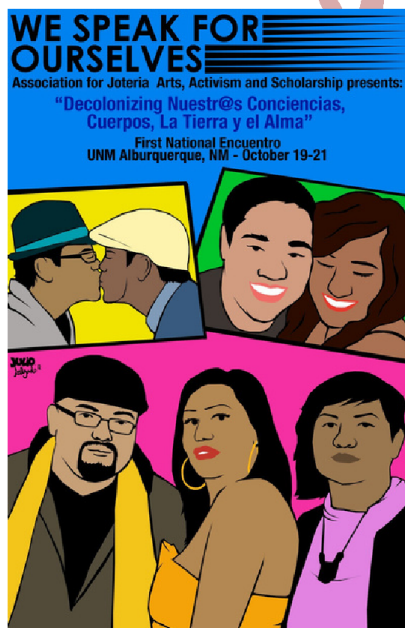
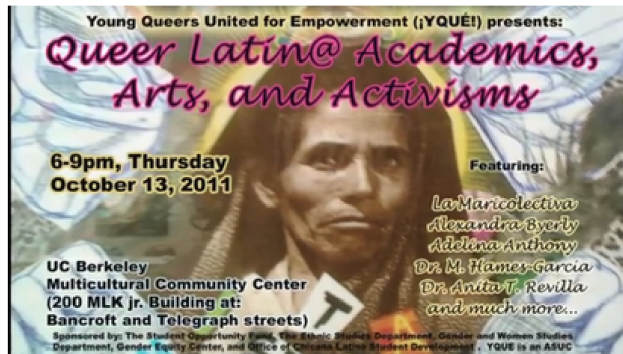


Entrance with
conference badge only!



53

Celebrating 15 Years of Jotería Art, Activism, & Scholarship





Sunday

March 22nd, 2026

9:30AM - 11:00AM

Closing Ceremony

College of Education, Room 1151

Moderators: Angel Gonzalez and Nadia Zepeda

Want to Join the AJAAS Board?

Co-Chair Elect

- Support and work in collaboration with the Co-Chairs in the implementation of the policies and procedures of the organization
- Be responsible for editing and promoting AJAAS' digital publications
- Commit to serving for three years (one year as Co-Chairs Elect, one year as Co-Chairs, Ex-Officios).

Art Liaison

- Communicate frequently with AJAAS members who identify as artists, and convey the needs of this community to the Board
- In collaboration with the Activism Liaison and Scholarship Liaison, maintain and curate the "Spotlight" section of the website, assuring that the work of our members is adequately represented;
- Consult with the editors of the Joteria Newsletter (Co-Chair elect) and write short articles about Joteria Artists and their work.

Activism Liaison

- Communicate frequently with AJAAS members who identify as activist, and convey the needs of this community to the Board
- In collaboration with the Art Liaison and Scholarship Liaison, maintain and curate the "Spotlight" section of the website, assuring that the work of our members is adequately represented;
- Consult with the editors of the Joteria Newsletter (Co-Chair elect) and write short articles about Joteria Activism.

Scholarship Liaison

- Communicate frequently with AJAAS members who identify as scholars, and convey the needs of this constituency to the Board;
- In collaboration with the Art Liaison and Activism Liaison, maintain and curate the "Spotlight" section of the website, assuring that the work of our members is adequately represented;
- Consult with the editors of the Joteria Newsletter (Co-Chair elect) and write short articles about Joteria Scholarship.





Conference Liaison

- Function as a bridge between the board and the conference committee, maintaining clear and open lines of communication.
- Be in charge of ensuring the site committee has necessary resources including the conference handbook and guidelines. Will update the handbook as needed.

Web Queerstorian

- Update the digital archive of all historical materials pertaining to the organization including the website
- Document all events including conferences, meetings, symposiums and special events, through the use of cameras, and other audio, visual recording devices.
- Put together a committee of volunteers who will help with these goals.

Social Media and Outreach Liaison

- Be responsible for doing outreach for the organization including to media outlets, in consort with co-chairs.
- Work with the conference site committee to disseminate information related to the conference.
- Post marketing material on social media sites to promote AJAAS and affiliates

Treasurer

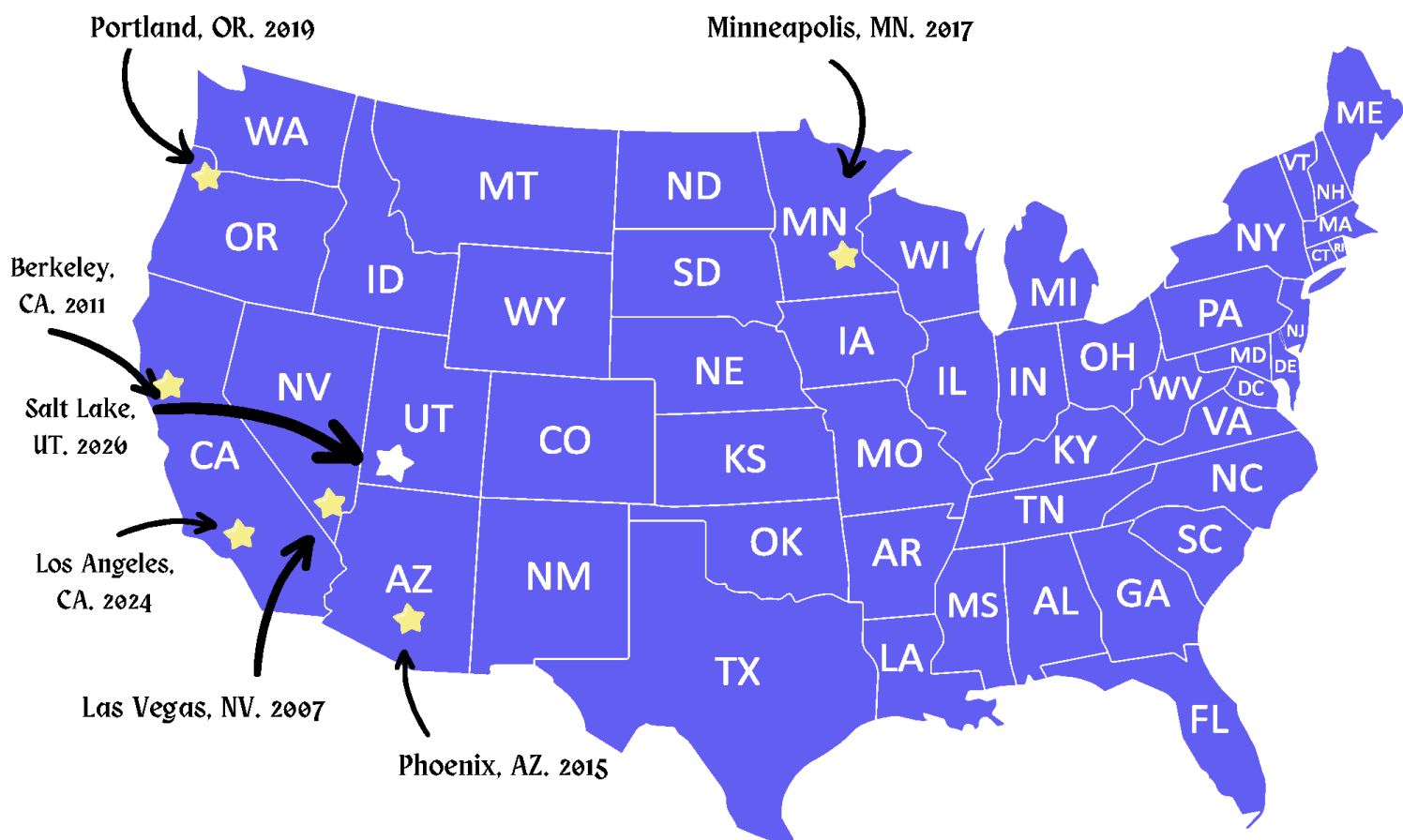
- In collaboration with the Co-Chairs, regularly review, report, and reconcile financial documents and statements for the organization
- Sign all checks issued by the organization
- Seek funding opportunities and coordinate development efforts

Membership Coordinator

- In collaboration with the Board and Queerstorian/Web Director, be responsible for making recommendations on the uses and functionality of the listservs, email lists, and other social media
- Be responsible for maintaining moderation of public and members listservs
- Work in consultation with the Web Director to create and maintain the content of the AJAAS website's membership section



Want to host the AJAAS BiAnnual Conference 2030?



Commissioned Artist Bio

Filis Q. Diaz



Filis Q. Diaz is a traditional and digital illustrator born in Caracas, Venezuela (1994), and currently based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her work is deeply autobiographical, rooted in memory, tenderness, and the quiet poetry of everyday life. Through a nostalgic and colorful lens, Filis captures small pleasures, intimate moments, and domestic scenes that reflect both personal and collective experience.

Having migrated across several Latin American countries—including Ecuador, Argentina, and Brazil—her practice is shaped by themes of displacement, belonging, and cultural memory. The landscapes, traditions, and emotional imprints of the places she has lived in and visited recur throughout her work, blending past and present into visual narratives that feel both intimate and universal.

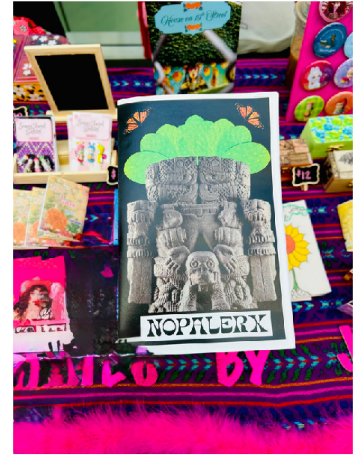
In 2023, Filis illustrated the children's book *Sofia Goes Voting*, written by George Luccaci. In 2024, her work was featured in *Latina Latinx MN: Re/Claiming Space in a Time of Change* at the Catherine G. Murphy Gallery in Minnesota.

Vendors

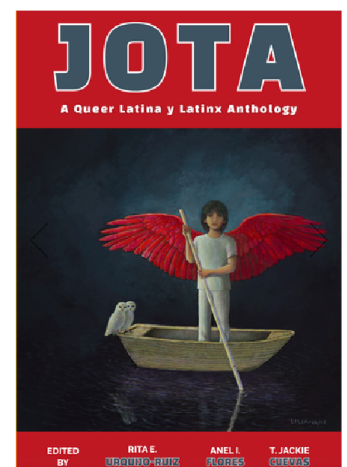
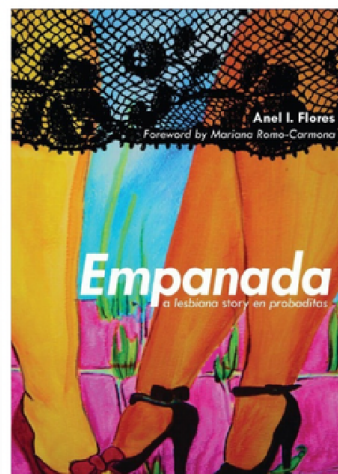
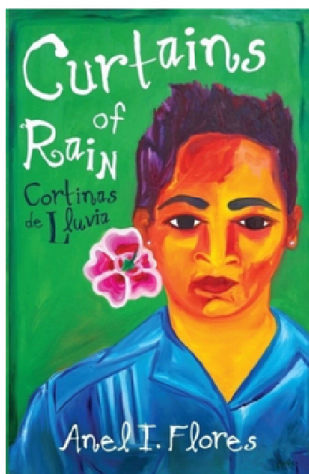


UAF LEGACY HEALTH

Vendors



*zines
by Jodi*



MY SCHEDULE

Friday

10:30AM - 12:00PM

Concurrent Session #1

Session Type

Location

2:45 PM - 4:15 PM

Concurrent Session #2

Session Type

Location

4:30PM - 6:00PM

Concurrent Session #3

Session Type

Location

Saturday

10:30AM - 12:00PM

Concurrent Session #4

Session Type

Location

1:45 PM - 3:15 PM

Concurrent Session #5

Session Type

Location

3:30PM - 5:00PM

Concurrent Session #6

Session Type

Location

Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Thank you to our individual sponsors!

**The Gender-Base Violence Consortium at
the University of Utah
Queering STEM, University of Utah**

Dr. Bri Sérrano

Luz Venegas

Dr. Ariana Garcia

Dr. Jack Caraves

Jessica Vazquez

Dr. Alán Pelaez Lopez

Dr. Juana María Rodríguez

Jennifer Covarrubias

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Dr. Melissa W. Wright

Dr. Dinorah Sánchez

Dr. Caleb Luna

Dr. Sergio A. Gonzalez

Andrea A. Preza

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Dr. PJ DiPietro

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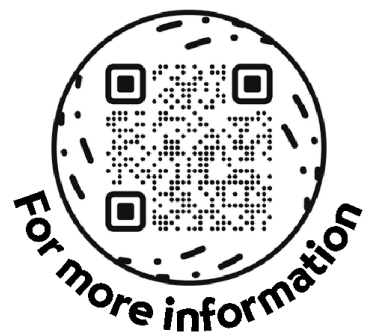
UTAH MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

is kindly providing classroom space
for us during the conference.

Free entry into the museum
is available **Friday** and
Saturday using your AJAAS
conference badge.



Storywork: The Prints of Marie Watt
From the Collections of Jordan D.
Schnitzer and His Family Foundation



University of Utah Map

- (A) Alumni House (queerceañera): 155 S Central Campus Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112
(B) SAEC: College of Education (main conference): 1721 Campus Center Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112
(C) UMFA: 410 Campus Center Dr, Salt Lake City, UT 84112



For accessibility rides, please check-in our
registration/accessibility desk



